

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

January 28, 2003

The Honorable Spencer Abraham
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to express our support for U.S. participation in one of the most important endeavors being undertaken by the international energy sciences community - the ITER project. Since the 1998 U.S. withdrawal from ITER, the project has been substantially redesigned, its costs have been greatly reduced and a strong consensus has developed in the scientific community in favor of U.S. participation. The November 20, 2002 letter to Dr. Orbach from the NRC Burning Plasma Assessment Committee also supported this participation but specified: "any U.S. involvement should at a minimum guarantee

- access to all data from ITER,
- the right to propose and carry out experiments, and
- a role in producing the high-technology components of the facility, consistent with the size of the U.S. contribution to the program."

At the next ITER meeting in February, the roles of the participants will be set. Our failure to attend this meeting would jeopardize our ability to participate fully in the project and severely disadvantage our fusion energy program. In light of such factors, it is clearly time for the Department of Energy to take the necessary steps to reenter the ITER negotiations and to prepare for a renewed partnership in ITER.

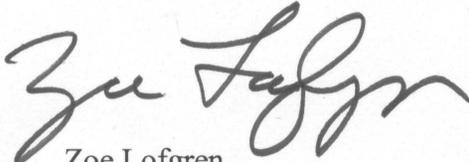
With the our increasing reliance on imported fossil fuels, and growing concern about greenhouse gas emissions, other potential sources of power must be aggressively pursued. In the case of fusion, it seems clear that international collaboration is the most efficient and affordable path to a commercial energy source. With the support of the Administration, the concurrence of Congress and with your leadership, the U.S. contribution to ITER will benefit the U.S. science and technology base. Even though it will be years before fusion energy can be used to generate electric power, the eventual payoff of a large new supply of clean energy is too great to ignore.

For the past five years, ITER negotiations have continued without U.S. involvement. We urge you to send a clear message to the ITER community that the U.S. plans to participate in the negotiations and the subsequent design, construction and operation of the facility. Funding of ITER reentry at a credible level will guarantee that

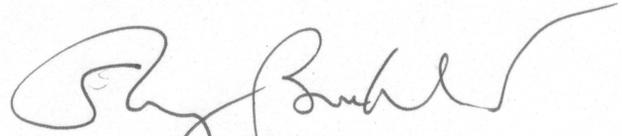
the U.S. research community will have the strongest voice possible in positioning itself in the project and its work packages. We must ensure that our domestic fusion program is strong and that a new generation of scientists is inspired to work in this area.

We thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to your support of ITER and domestic fusion energy research.

Sincerely,



Zoe Lofgren



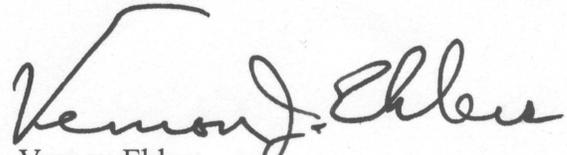
Sherwood L. Boehlert



Ralph M. Hall



George Nethercutt



Vernon Ehlers